

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

✦ Security Council last night condemns UNITA for its continuing military actions and imposes arms and oil embargo against Angolan territory not controlled by Government; embargo to enter into force on 25 September unless cease-fire is established.

✦ Secretary-General expresses extreme concern about outbreak of fighting in Abkhazia, Georgia, citing violation of 27 July cease-fire Agreement; calls on all parties, particularly Abkhaz side, to stop fighting immediately and to withdraw to original cease-fire lines.

✦ Bosnian Presidency signs cease-fire agreement with Bosnian Serb delegation in Geneva; Co-Chairmen of Yugoslavia Conference invite three parties to Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict to meeting in Sarajevo on 21 September to consider peace package.

✦ General Assembly yesterday elects eight of 11 judges to serve on International Tribunal to prosecute violations of international humanitarian law committed in former Yugoslavia; three more to be elected today.

✦ Special Representative Jonathan Howe says United Nations involvement in Somalia has been successful overall; notes that deaths from hunger have been eliminated since last year.

✦ Secretary-General to ask Security Council to consider new ways to promote implementation of Cyprus resolutions if good offices mission does not succeed soon; proposes to send team of experts to island to address issues relating to package of confidence-building measures.

✦ PLO ready to end state of antagonism with Israel by departing from usual United Nations resolutions during upcoming session of General Assembly, Observer for Palestine tells Committee on Rights of Palestinian People.

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Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council last night condemned the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) for its continuing military actions and decided to impose an arms and oil embargo against the territory of Angola not controlled by the Government. The embargo will enter into force on 25 September unless a cease-fire is established. The Council took that action by unanimously adopting resolution 864 (1993).

The resolution requires all States to prevent the sale or supply of arms, ammunition and petroleum products to the territory of Angola other than through points of entry named by the Angolan Government. The Council said it was ready to consider imposing further measures, including trade measures and restrictions on travel by UNITA personnel, if an effective cease-fire had not been established by 1 November. It further decided to establish a committee to monitor the sanctions.

The Council also decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for three months until 15 December. It reiterated its readiness to consider expanding substantially the United Nations presence in the country in the event of significant progress in the peace process. Noting statements by UNITA that it was prepared to resume peace negotiations and cooperate in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all Angolans, the Council demanded that UNITA act accordingly. It strongly condemned UNITA's repeated attacks against UN personnel working to provide humanitarian assistance.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed extreme concern about an outbreak of fighting today in Abkhazia, Georgia. The Secretary-General said reported attacks by Abkhaz forces on Sukhumi, the capital of Abkhazia, and Ochamchira were a very serious violation of the cease-fire Agreement of 27 July. That Agreement had been mediated by the Russian Federation and welcomed by the Security Council in resolution 854 (1993).

The renewed fighting jeopardized the regional peace process being conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, the Secretary-General warned. He called on all parties, in particular the Abkhaz side, to stop fighting immediately and to withdraw to the original cease-fire lines.

The Secretary-General was considering what further action might be taken, and was expected to speak with the Russian Federation's Permanent Representative this afternoon, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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Members of the collective Bosnian Presidency met yesterday and today with the Bosnian Serb delegation to the Geneva peace talks and signed a cease-fire agreement calling for a cessation of hostilities between the Bosnian Army and Bosnian Serb forces, according to a United Nations spokesman. The agreement contained provisions relating to the disbanding of detainee camps, access for humanitarian convoys and the creation of a working group on human rights.

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, have invited the three parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina to a meeting in Sarajevo on 21 September to consider the Geneva peace package as a whole, the spokesman said. He described the proposed meeting as an important development, and expressed the hope that it would lead to a firm agreement.

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The General Assembly yesterday elected eight of the 11 judges to serve on the International Tribunal to prosecute serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia. The judges, who will serve four-year terms as of 15 November, are: Gabrielle Kirk McDonald (United States); Jules Deschenes (Canada); Antonio Cassese (Italy); Georges Michel Abi-Saab (Egypt); Li Haopei (China); Germain Le Foyer De Costil (France); Lal Chan Vohrah (Malaysia); and Sir Ninian Stephen (Australia).

The Assembly had before it a list of 22 candidates, each from a different country, recommended by the Security Council. A candidate from Sweden had previously withdrawn from the list. In accordance with the Tribunal's Statute, each candidate had to receive an absolute majority of votes from the UN's 184 Member States and the two non-member States with permanent observer missions -- the Holy See and Switzerland. Thus, a candidate had to receive at least 94 votes for election. The observer for the Holy See abstained from voting "in consideration of the Holy See's specific nature" and objectives.

The Assembly met again today to complete the voting for the remaining three seats. Meanwhile, the candidates from Peru, Sri Lanka and Switzerland had withdrawn from the list.

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The Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, Jonathan Howe, today told correspondents at Headquarters that the United Nations involvement in the country had been a "good story" overall. He pointed out that some 300,000 Somalis had died of hunger last year, whereas practically none had died for want of food this year.

Admiral Howe said the United Nations was being challenged and obstructed on a daily basis by General Mohammed Farah Aideed's militia. UNOSOM II tried to avoid civilian casualties in every undertaking, but casualties could not be avoided when civilians were mixed in among attacking militiamen. He expressed satisfaction with UNOSOM II's military command, noting that troops from some 30 countries were working together despite differences in culture and training.

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Yesterday, Admiral Howe met for two hours with the Secretary-General and also discussed the rehabilitation of the Somali police with senior United Nations officials. He was scheduled to brief the Security Council this afternoon on the security situation in the country.

Meanwhile, two Italian privates were killed last night by sniper fire while jogging in Mogadishu, according to a United Nations spokesman. UNOSOM II troops fired back in the direction of the muzzle flashes and searched for the gunmen, but found nothing.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warned that if the current efforts of his mission of good offices in Cyprus do not succeed soon, he will have to invite the Security Council to consider alternative ways to promote effective implementation of its many resolutions on Cyprus. In a report to the Security Council dated 14 September, the Secretary-General said that the Turkish Cypriot side had not yet shown the goodwill and cooperation needed to achieve agreement on a package of confidence-building measures related to Varosha and Nicosia International Airport.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali proposes to send a team of experts to Cyprus in early October to address questions about the effects of the package, including those relating to the economic imbalance between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. He said he also planned to send a team of civil aviation experts there as soon as possible to assess the technical requirements for reopening Nicosia International Airport. The Secretary-General will report to the Security Council during the next two months on the outcome of his efforts and the work of the two teams.

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The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is ready to end the state of antagonism with Israel by considering a departure from the usual United Nations resolutions during the upcoming session of the General Assembly, the Observer for Palestine told the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People today. The PLO stance was a balanced one that took into account positive developments while upholding basic principles, M. Nassar Al-Kidwa said.

Describing the secret contacts that led up to the mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, as well as the declaration of principles signed on Monday in Washington, Mr. Al-Kidwa said the "Oslo channel" had been opened largely because the Israeli Knesset had revoked the law banning all contact with the PLO. He went on to say that the central purpose of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's recent meeting with Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had been to demonstrate the importance of United Nations involvement in implementing the declaration.

Mr. Al-Kidwa stressed that the declaration, which had been described in terms of its impact on the Gaza Strip and Jericho, would have a broader reach than those two areas.

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